

WHEREAS, Abandoning the DEIS has left many key questions unanswered, including whether or not environmental impacts could be mitigated or avoided, and has led to no resolution under NEPA of a critical public facility issue; and

WHEREAS, According to the 1997 DEIS, the ICC on the Master Plan Alignment would provide a critical link between the I-270 and I-95 corridors, and "substantially reduce congestion," diverting up to 15,000 cars per day from the Capital Beltway and nearly 80,000 per day from congested neighborhood roads and arterial highways; and

WHEREAS, Alternative east-west routes on the Master Plan Alignment, including alternatives to upgrade existing roads, were found in the DEIS to be less effective than the ICC in meeting east-west transportation demands, cause equal or greater environmental damage, and result in more disruptions to established communities and more displacements of existing businesses and residences; and

WHEREAS, The DEIS study concluded that there are no practicable or feasible transit alternatives to the ICC; and

WHEREAS, Using modern environmental design and mitigation techniques, such as elevated "end-on" construction, limited tunneling in key sections, community-oriented and aesthetically pleasing landscaping and design, and advanced storm drainage filtration and collection systems would make the ICC a national model for environmentally sensitive, community-oriented design and mitigation techniques; and

WHEREAS, State and federal regulatory agencies have consistently approved projects with similar environmental impacts because of these modern environmental design and mitigation techniques, after a full and complete NEPA process; and

WHEREAS, The most recent study of the ICC performed in 2001 by the Montgomery County Planning Board's 34-member Transportation Policy Report (TPR) Task Force found that the ICC on the Master Plan Alignment is the single most effective road or transit project for relieving traffic congestion and improving travel times on areas roads; and

WHEREAS, A majority of the TPR Task Force voted to support construction of the ICC; and

WHEREAS, The Transportation Solutions Group, the most recent State-appointed study commission on this issue, recommended building the ICC using advanced environmental mitigation and design, aesthetically pleasing landscaping and pedestrian paths, and other parkway-style design elements; and

WHEREAS, The ICC would provide a capability for express bus service conveniently linking major job and population centers in the I-270 corridor and outlying communities to BWI Airport, downtown Baltimore, Prince George's County, and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Alternative financing methods, including public-private partnerships, could create alternative, non-tax, revenue sources to fund all or substantially all ICC construction and maintenance costs; and